



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

A Botanical Section of the Biological Society of Washington has recently been established, holding its first meeting on Jan. 4th, when papers were read by Professors Burgess, Knowlton, Tracy and Miss Southworth. Mr. Crozier is Secretary. We wish the new organization success and permanence.

Proceedings of the Club.

The regular monthly meeting was held at Columbia College on Tuesday evening, Dec. 13; Vice-President Hogg in the chair and forty-nine persons present.

Messrs. Henry Edwards and Smith Ely Jelliffe were elected Active Members.

Dr. T. J. W. Burgess, of London, Canada; Prof. John Macoun, of Ottawa; Isaac Holden, of Bridgeport, Conn.; Prof. Byron D. Halsted, of Ames, Iowa; O. F. Cook, of Syracuse; James Vroom, of St. Stephen, New Brunswick; C. E. Smith, of Philadelphia; Rev. Dr. Geo. E. Post, of Beirut, Syria, and Prof. J. F. James, of Oxford, Ohio, were elected Corresponding Members.

Dr. Britton introduced the subject of the preparation of a new list of the plants of New York City and vicinity to serve as a basis for a local descriptive Flora. He advocated the printing at once of a bare check-list of the species and varieties known to grow within the circle of 100 miles radius from the city, which should be freely distributed to all botanists of the region, with a request for their notes on the distribution of the plants and for additions to the list. On motion the following committee was appointed to prepare and issue such a list: Messrs. J. F. Poggenburg, Addison Brown, Thos. C. Porter, E. E. Sterns, E. B. Southwick, Arthur Hollick and N. L. Britton.

The Secretary read a communication from Dr. Rusby containing a plea to the Postmaster General to exercise his power in recommending to Congress a change in the existing postal laws by which it shall be made legal to send through the United States mail together with Natural History specimens and without thereby increasing the rate of postage, written labels bearing the name, place and date of collection, and name of the collector of the specimen with which they are associated. The desirability of this change was made the subject of remark by several mem-

bers and the plea was endorsed by a unanimous vote. It read as follows :

To the Hon. Postmaster General U. S. A., Washington, D. C.:

DEAR SIR.—Of two four lb. packages of dried plants now before me, marked for transportation, the one to a post-office in Oregon, the other to a suburb of this city, the former will be transported by your department at a heavy loss ; the latter, which you could transport at a handsome profit, will go by express.

Five thousand Botanists throughout the United States are more or less continuously engaged in the forwarding of such parcels, and always choose their mode of transportation in the manner above indicated. I, myself, have probably a ton of such matter to forward during the coming year. The same statement applies to thousands of Ornithologists, Entomologists, and other Natural History collectors.

It is clear that your department suffers the annual loss of an appreciable amount of revenue :

- 1st. By the excess of expenses over receipts from such packages as it transports ;
- 2d. By the loss of that portion of such packages which it could profitably transport but which now go forward by express.

Upon the side of the people the evils of the present system bear much more heavily. Natural History collectors are, almost without exception, people of very limited means, working in their several departments for the benefit of science, for the most part without pecuniary recompense. They must therefore, practice every economy, and are especially worthy of every liberal consideration which can justly be extended to them. At the same time they are, as a class, greatly overworked, and must practice even a more rigid economy in the matter of time, than in the matter of money. Yet under the existing postal laws, they must choose between suffering injustice in one of the two directions above pointed out. In sending parcels by mail they must do one of three things :

- 1st. Print their labels at a great expense;
- 2d. Send written labels with their specimens and subject the parcel to letter-postage.
- 3d. Make out two sets of labels, one, bearing a number, to go with the specimens, the other, the authentic label, defaced with a number corresponding to that accompanying a specimen, to go separately by letter-post.

Any one of these alternatives is so injurious, that, except where great distance is to be covered, senders prefer to forward by express, to the great disadvantage both of themselves and the Postal Department.

Now the essence of my plea lies in the fact that to a collector an authentic label forms just as truly a part of his specimen as does one of the leaves of his plant or one of the wings of his bird. For this reason I say the present law works real injustice.

The remedy is such a simple one that it seems to me to rest easily within your hands.

I, therefore, most respectfully and earnestly pray you to properly recommend and urge upon Congress, during its present session to so modify the existing postal laws as to make it legal to send through the United States mails, together with natural history specimens, and without thereby increasing the rate of postage on the same, of

written labels bearing in addition to the name or names of the specimen to which its label is attached, or with which it is associated, such information regarding its identity, locality, date of collection and name of collector as may without being descriptive serve to properly indicate its position in the natural series to which it belongs.

Respectfully yours,

HENRY H. RUSBY.

Mr. H. Mintorn, representing Mrs. Charles Mogridge, described the methods of modelling sections of plants practiced by them for the British Museum of Natural History.

A model in wax was exhibited of the English primrose, showing longitudinal section of pistil much enlarged.

A paper by Dr. O. R. Willis on the history of the Weeping Willow was read by the Secretary.

Mr. E. E. Sterns read a paper on the rediscovery of *Nymphæa elegans* at a new station in Texas (see p. 13). He also exhibited seeds of *Lithospermum arvense* from Missouri and remarked on their peculiar markings; also the fruit of a species of *Calycanthus* from the Tennessee mountains reported as very poisonous to cattle and sheep and locally known as "bubby." He distributed the pods, and stated that Dr. T. F. Allen had tried them on a dog and obtained only negative results.

Professor Schrenk remarked on his successful use of Wickersheimer's preservative fluid in retaining the leaves on herbarium specimens of plants from which they generally separate in drying, and showed *Diospyros Virginiana* and several conifers to illustrate its efficiency for that purpose.

A paper by the Rev. W. M. Beauchamp, of Baldwinsville, New York, entitled "Onondaga Ferns" was read by the Secretary.

The Chairman remarked on the very serious illness of Dr. Asa Gray, who has been prostrated by a stroke of paralysis. On motion the Secretary was instructed to communicate the sympathy of the Club to Mrs. Gray, and the hope that Dr. Gray would soon be restored to health.